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## **Sussex County faces serious threat from dangerous Hurricane Irene**

***Storm center expected to pass just off Delaware coast, but hurricane-force winds, flooding, and 10 inches of rain expected***

**FOR IMMEDIATE  
RELEASE**

**1530 Hours, Wednesday  
Aug. 24, 2011**

A dangerous Hurricane Irene continues to churn off the southeastern United States coast, with its sights set on possibly brushing Delaware by week's end, lashing the region with storm-force winds, large waves, and flooding rains.

Forecasters expect the center of the Category 3 storm, now with sustained winds of 130 mph, to pass approximately 75 to 100 miles off the Delaware coast late Saturday night or early Sunday morning, before quickly departing the region later in the day Sunday. At that time, the storm may be slightly less intense, at Category 2, with sustained winds of 100 mph.

While a direct hit is not in the forecast, Sussex County is nonetheless expected to feel some of the stronger effects of Hurricane Irene, which covers a wider swath than most other storms. Winds of at least 40 mph, possibly gusting to 75 mph, 10-foot waves in the surf zone, tidal flooding and as much as 10 inches of rain are all possible with this storm.

No evacuations have been ordered, and no shelters have been designated. The Sussex County Emergency Operations Center, however, reminds the public to prepare now, in advance of the storm. Have a supply kit ready, know the evacuation routes, and plan ahead on where to relocate, if needed.

“This is still an evolving forecast, but with the degree of certainty the hurricane center seems to have with each update, it appears more likely

*Continued*

we're in for some very significant weather this weekend," said Joseph L. Thomas, director of Sussex County EOC director. "Anything can change, but now is the time that everyone should be using to prepare themselves and their property for the strong possibility of flooding rains, storm surge and high winds."

Forecasters believe Hurricane Irene's current predicted track will come close enough to give Sussex County the strongest effects of the storm, with tidal flooding likely in low-lying areas, particularly along the oceanfront and the Delaware Bay shoreline. Forecasters, meantime, say a storm surge of 2 to 4 feet is possible along coastal areas, on top of the 5 to 10 inches of rain expected across the area.

Residents and property owners should secure loose objects, such as lawn chairs and trash cans, to prevent storm winds from turning those items into potential projectiles. Also, residents in low-lying tidal areas should make sure submersible pumps are working and check storm drains to ensure they are clear of debris.

The Sussex County EOC encourages residents and visitors to continue monitoring the tropics and conditions as they deteriorate. For updates, stay tuned to local television and radio stations, the Sussex County EOC Web site at [www.sussexcountype.gov/services/storm](http://www.sussexcountype.gov/services/storm), and the County's Twitter feeds at [www.twitter.com/sussex\\_pio](http://www.twitter.com/sussex_pio) and [www.twitter.com/sussexctyde\\_eoc](http://www.twitter.com/sussexctyde_eoc). The public should also monitor the National Weather Service, at [www.nws.noaa.gov/er/phi](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/er/phi), for the latest forecast.

Sussex County urges those planning to visit the area for the upcoming weekend to carefully monitor conditions and plan accordingly. Campers in area parks should also monitor the forecasts, and be prepared to leave if ordered to do so.

For helpful tips on what to do in preparation for a hurricane, including evacuation maps and preparedness brochures, visit [www.sussexcountype.gov/services/storm](http://www.sussexcountype.gov/services/storm).

For more information, please contact the Sussex County EOC at (302) 855-7801.

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**Media calls should be directed to EOC spokeswoman Debra Jones at (302) 855-7801 or Sussex County Chief of Public Information Chip Guy at (302) 854-5000.**